CHAPTER 13 『BECAUSE YOU'RE BY MY SIDE』

THANKS TO FUJIMIYA-SAN'S TIGHT SHOTS,
MUNEMUNE-SENPAI CAN ONLY SEND BACK LOOSE RETURNS,
WHICH ALLOWS HOUJOU-SAN TO SMASH THE BALL.

THE CAPTAIN IS GOOD AT DEFENDING, SO SHE'S HOLDING HER GROUND SOMEHOW.
BUT AS THIS PATTERN KEEPS REPEATING,
THE TEAM THAT GETS STUCK ON THE DEFENSIVE WILL INEVITABLY LOSE POINTS.
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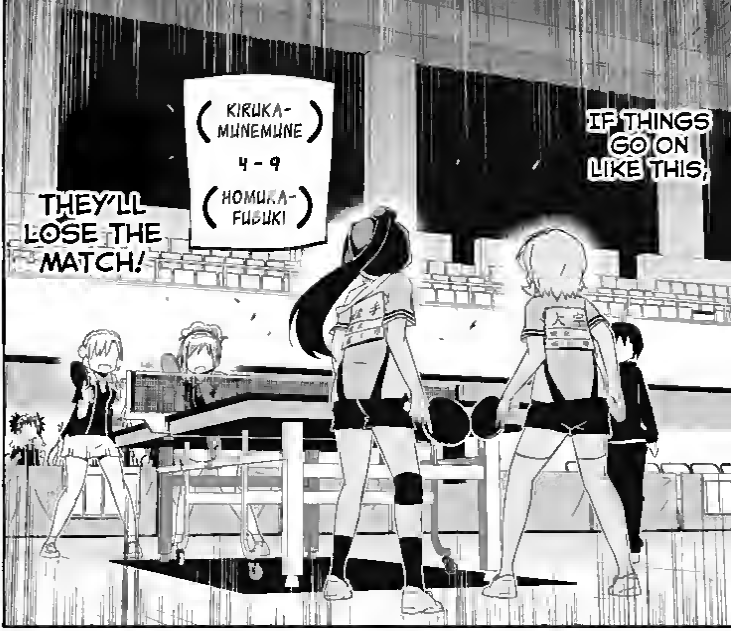
THEY NEED TO FIND A WAY TO STRIKE BACK.


KIRUKA-MUNEMUNE
4 - 9
HOMURA-FUBUKI
IF THINGS GO ON LIKE THIS,
THEY'LL LOSE THE MATCH!

...

MY PASSES
ARE PER-FECT!

VICTORY IS OURS!
SO LONG AS SHE CONTINUES EARNING POINTS OUT OF BOOBIES'S RETURNS,
SO LONG AS HOMURA KEEPS THIS UP,
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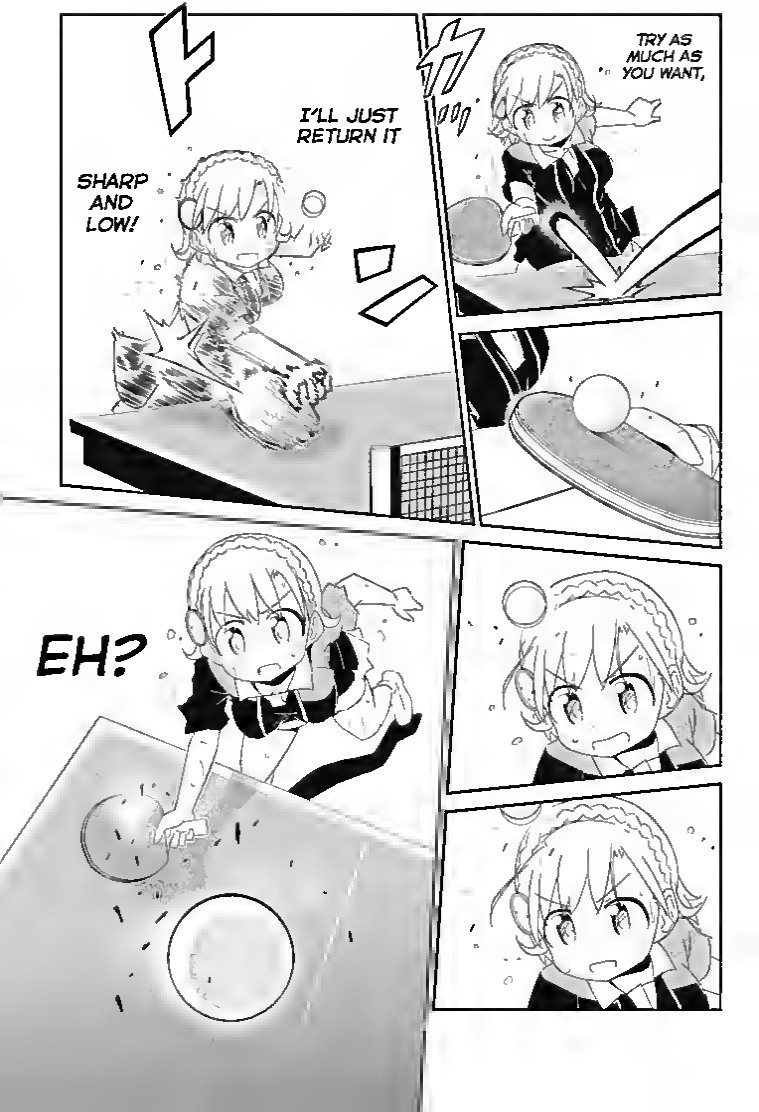
HERE IT GOES.
THE BEACON THAT SIGNALS OUR COUNTER-ATTACK.

THIS IS THE SHOT
THAT WILL LEAD US TO VICTORY!
I KNOW YOUR CHOPS ALREADY.
THEY WON'T WORK ON ME!


TRY AS MUCH AS YOU WANT,
I'LL JUST RETURN IT
SHARP AND LOW!
EH?

WHA-
IT WENT UP...!
GO!
MUNE-MUNE!

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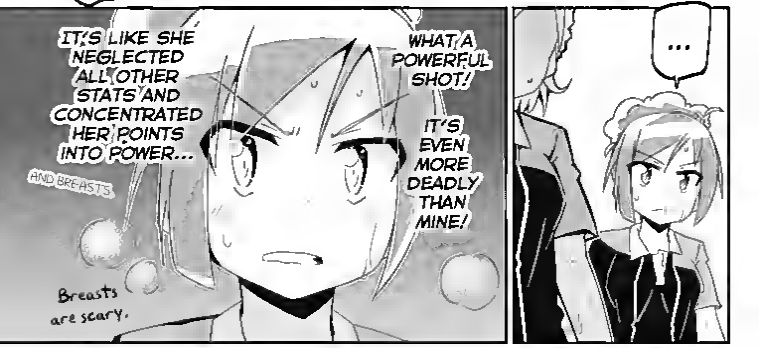
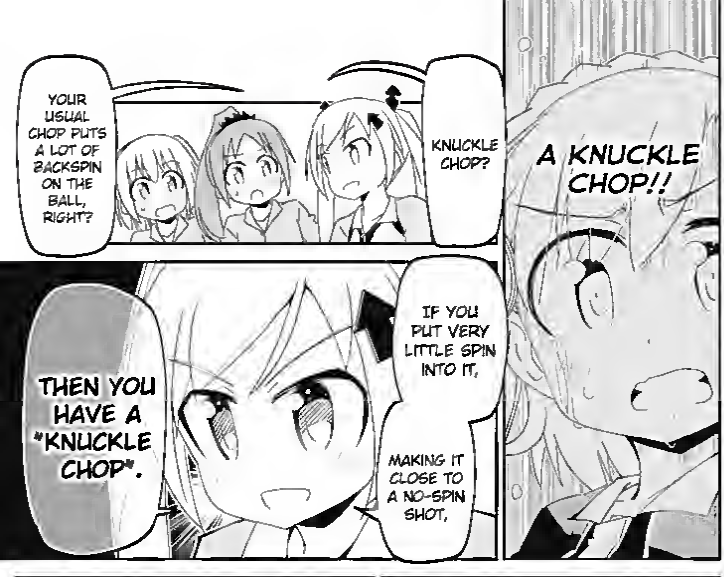
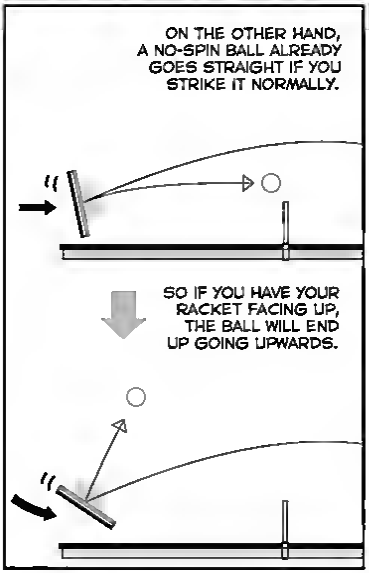
KIRUKA-MUNEMUNE 5-9 KOMURA-FUBUKI

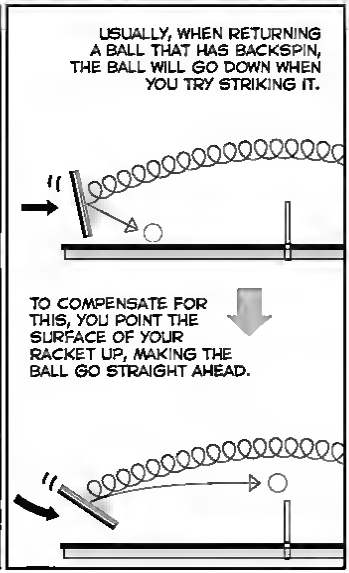
THE MOST POWERFUL SHOT IN THIS MATCH!
YEAH! THAT'S MUNEMUNE-SENPAI'S SMASH FOR YOU!
AWW
WHY ARE YOU COMPETING WITH HER?
THEY'RE EVEN BETTER, IN EFFECTIVENESS, AT LEAST. I'M NOT CONCEDING THIS ONE TO YOU, KOYORI-CHAN!
HER SMASHES ARE JUST AS AMAZING AS KOYORI'S!
AS EXPECTED FROM MUNE-MUNE-SENPAI!
Eek?
NOPE.


IT'S LIKE SHE NEGLECTED ALL OTHER STATS AND CONCENTRATED HER POINTS INTO POWER...
AND BREASTS.
Breasts are scary.
WHAT A POWERFUL SHOT!
IT'S EVEN MORE DEADLY THAN MINE!
...

WHY...?
W-WHY?!
HOW DID YOU DO THAT?!
I DIDN'T MAKE ANY MISTAKES COMPENSATING FOR THE BACKSPIN IN YOUR CHOP!
WHY DID THE BALL GO SO HIGH?!
Don't tell me... that chop was...
THAT'S RIGHT.
THAT WAS A KNUCKLE CHOP.


YOUR USUAL CHOP PUTS A LOT OF BACKSPIN ON THE BALL, RIGHT?
KNUCKLE CHOP?
A KNUCKLE CHOP!!
IF YOU PUT VERY LITTLE SPIN INTO IT,
MAKING IT CLOSE TO A NO-SPIN SHOT,
THEN YOU HAVE A "KNUCKLE CHOP".


ON THE OTHER HAND, A NO-SPIN BALL ALREADY GOES STRAIGHT IF YOU STRIKE IT NORMALLY.
SO IF YOU HAVE YOUR RACKET FACING UP, THE BALL WILL END UP GOING UPWARDS.


USUALLY, WHEN RETURNING A BALL THAT HAS BACKSPIN, THE BALL WILL GO DOWN WHEN YOU TRY STRIKING IT.
TO COMPENSATE FOR THIS, YOU POINT THE SURFACE OF YOUR RACKET UP, MAKING THE BALL GO STRAIGHT AHEAD.

THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LOADED CHOP AND A KNUCKLE CHOP
In general terms
EH. THEN A KNUCKLE CHOP ISN'T REALLY ALL THAT IMPRESSIVE.
NOT BY ITSELF.
BUT WHAT YOU DO IS YOU MIX IT UP WITH LOADED CHOPS.
FIRST, YOU MAKE YOUR OPPONENT THINK YOU'RE ONLY HITTING LOADED CHOPS.
THEN, WHEN THEY GO FOR THE BALL WITH THEIR RACKET FACING UP...
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU HIT THEM WITH A KNUCKLE CHOP?

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BY MIXING UP LOADED CHOPS AND KNUCKLE CHOPS,
YOU GET A TECHNIQUE WITH HUGE RESULTS!
EX-ACTLY
THE BALL WILL GO UP!
(KOMUKA FUJIUKI) 9 - 6 (KIKUKA MUNEMUNE)
DECEIVE
THE IMPORTANT POINT HERE IS KNOWING HOW TO DECEIVE YOUR OPPONENT.
Thanks to the centrifugal force the inner side causes a weaker spin and the outer side a stronger spin!
IN
OUT
THE CAPTAIN CONTROLS THE SPIN BY CHANGING THE POINT OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE RACKET AND THE BALL.
LOADED CHOP
THE SPIN IS INCREASED BY STRIKING THE BALL WITH THE OUTER SIDE OF THE RACKET, THUS INCREASING THE AREA OF CONTACT WITH THE SURFACE.
KNUCKLE CHOP
THE SPIN IS REDUCED BY STRIKING THE BALL NEAR THE BASE OF THE RACKET, THUS REDUCING THE AREA OF CONTACT WITH THE SURFACE.

WHILE HER STROKING FORM IS ALWAYS THE SAME,
BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS, SHE CAN GIVE OUT CHOPS WITH DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF SPIN
MAKING IT EVEN HARDER FOR HER OPPONENT TO RETURN HER CHOPS PROPERLY.
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THESE UNPRE-DICTABLE CHOPS ARE ONLY MADE POSSIBLE
THANKS TO THE CAPTAIN'S PRECISE TECHNIQUE.
OUR ATTACK PATTERN WILL FALL APART!
IF I KEEP FAILING TO PASS THE BALL,
...!
COME ON!
COME ON!

I HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO RETURN THESE BALLS.
SO THOSE LOADED CHOPS SHE'D BEEN SHOOTING SINCE THE BEGINNING
WERE ALREADY A PART OF HER STRATEGY.
IF YOU MISS THE ANGLE WHEN RETURNING A LOADED CHOP, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE YOU HAVE ALREADY LOST THAT POINT
NO, IT'S HARD TO EVEN GET THE BALL TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE!!
ESPECIALLY THESE POWERFUL BACKSPIN CHOPS. I CAN'T LAND A STRONG SHOT AGAINST THEM.
SHE'S BEEN IMPLANTING THIS CONCERN IN HER OPPONENT SINCE THE START OF THE MATCH

I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO FACE MY RACKET UPWARDS.
EVEN KNOWING IT COULD BE A KNUCKLE CHOP,
WHICH IS IT?
IS IT A LOADED CHOP? A KNUCKLE CHOP?
WHICH?!
THE CAPTAIN CREATES THE OPPORTUNITIES...

AND MUNE-MUNE-SENPAI FINISHES IT OFF.
THESE ARE
OUR SENPAI!
HAA
HAH
HAA
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SHE ALWAYS LETS ME HIT THE MOST SATISFYING SHOTS!
KIRUKA REALLY IS AMAZING!
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NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME!
SO LONG AS SHE'S BY MY SIDE,
THAT DAY WHEN WE DECIDED TO PLAY DOUBLES
WAS THE BEGINNING OF OUR CHAL-LENGE

11
3
NO CHANCE!
I'M NUMBER ONE IN THE RANKS, YOU KNOW? THE ACE!
HAA
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD BEAT ME JUST BECAUSE THERE'S TWO OF YOU?
HAA
AREN'T YOU TAKING ME TOO LIGHTLY?
HAH
HAH
YOUR IDEA OF PUTTING TOGETHER SKILL AND POWER IS INTERESTING,
BUT IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD IF YOU DON'T HAVE GOOD COMBI-NATION.
I'M SORRY, BUT YOU SHOULD JUST GIVE UP—
WE'RE NOT GIVING UP!

I'M CONFIDENT!
WE CAN DO IT IF WE'RE TOGETHER!
...
I'LL JUST BEAT YOU GUYS TO A PULP!
YOU'RE WELCOME TO TRY.
YES MA'AM!
AND SO...

EVERY DAY WAS A NEW CHALLENGE
FILLED WITH HEAVY TRAINING.
WE WERE STICKING TO A RIGOROUS ROUTINE...
A sign?
Index finger means backspin serve, thumb means...
BUT IT WAS NEVER UNPLEASANT.
HOW COULD IT BE WITH KIRUKA BY MY SIDE ALL OF THE TIME?

FINALLY ...
11
8
HAH
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA
HAH
HAA
THEY BEAT SHIDOU, THE ACE!
IT DOESN'T REALLY COUNT BECAUSE IT WAS TWO AGAINST ONE THOUGH!
THOSE TWO FINALLY WON!
WE HAVE TO PUT THEM AGAINST OUR REGULAR DOUBLES PAIR RIGHT AWAY!
AS THE SUMMER TOURNAMENT APPROACHED...
WE CLIMBED THE RANKS, BECOMING SUZUME-GAHARA'S NUMBER ONE PAIR.

KIRUKA AND MUNE-MUNE.
THOSE WERE THE PLAYERS CHOSEN FOR THE COMPETITION'S SINGLES MATCHES
AS FOR THE DOUBLES ...
バチバチ...
SOMETHING WE COULD ONLY ACHIEVE TOGETHER...
THAT WAS SOMETHING ONLY MADE POSSIBLE
BECAUSE KIRUKA WAS THERE WITH ME!

NOT UNTIL WE ACHIEVE OUR DREAM.
WE WON'T BE STOPPED HERE.
10 20 5
...
NOW THAT FUJIMIYA-SAN'S PASSES AREN'T WORKING, THERE'S NO WAY THEY CAN LOSE!
THEY HAVE THIS MATCH IN THEIR HANDS ALREADY!
THIS IS IT!

DON'T GIVE UP, FUBUKI!
I'M ...
STILL WITH YOU!
....!

PAINTER WANKO